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THE REAL YELLOW PERIL.

BY HUGH H. LUSK.

IT is now some years since a note of alarm was sounded in Europe in connection with the future of the Mongolian race. The credit of this warning was given to the German Kaiser, who was supposed by some to have reasons of his own for turning public attention to possible dangers at a distance rather than to actual complications nearer home. It is needless to dwell on these speculations now. The possibilities of fifteen years ago have in this, as in many other things, given place to the experiences of the last three or four, and the question of the future of the peoples of eastern Asia in their relations to the rest of the world has made an immense stride from the realm of abstract discussion towards that of actual world politics.

The evolution of Japan, and her sudden leap into prominence as a naval and military Power, have been the immediate cause of this change; yet it may be doubted whether it has not tended rather to mislead than to enlighten many of the public in this country on some of the larger aspects of the question. To most of us Japan stands to-day for Mongolia, and her interesting and energetic people for the Mongolian race. Japan's ambitions and projects in the Western Pacific, her designs on Korea, and the covetous eyes she is supposed to have cast on the Philippines: for most people in America these are the really important, as well as the immediately interesting, questions of the Orient to-day. There is an uneasy feeling abroad that The Yellow Peril may turn out to be real enough, but it is supposed by many that instead of a repetition of the Middle Age invasion of Europe it will take the form of a naval war in the Pacific Ocean, and a possible bombardment of American cities on the western coast of this continent. Looking at the recent history of eastern Asia and the adjacent islands,

Japan, with her naval, military and industrial activities, seems very naturally, to most people, to embrace everything worth considering—for the present, at any rate—in the political movements of the Mongolian race. This impression, however, is certainly a mistaken one. Only half a century has passed since Japan began to awaken to some perception of the conditions and possibilities of modern civilization; and since then she has accomplished enough in various directions to leave the Caucasian world almost lost in speculation as to what she will do next. From an old-world civilization, easily confounded by our own people with barbarism, they have awakened with a rapidity that was startling to a modern life of commerce and industry, of applied science and liberal politics, of practical economics and advanced national organization, such as a dozen centuries have been hardly sufficient to teach the nations of Europe. The phenomenon is sufficiently startling to make us lose sight of the fact that, while they are undoubtedly a remarkable people, the Japanese are by no means unique in any of the characteristics that have gone in their case to the rapid development of a great national progress. These characteristics are not so much Japanese as Mongolian. The same dogged pursuance of a purpose once taken up; the same remarkable faculty for imitating the arts and learning the methods of other nations that appeal to them as useful; the same capacity for organization, and the same readiness to sacrifice the individual for the advancement of the common object, are to be found in the whole race occupying eastern Asia, as truly, if not yet to our eyes as conspicuously, as in the people of Japan itself.

Should there exist anything that may be looked on as a peril for the civilized world in the awakening of the peoples of Mongolian race, therefore, from the sleep of so many centuries, it is one that is by no means confined to Japan. We might even go farther and say that it is one in which the place of Japan, though prominent, is comparatively a small one, after all. Japan herself, it must be remembered, is but a small kingdom, and her people stand by no means in the front rank of the nations in population. It is true that her islands are crowded, and that her people would be glad of more room for expansion; and this, as all history bears witness, is the primary cause of national aggression. But as yet, at any rate, this need of room for expansion exists on no large scale in the case of Japan. She has already, within the last few

years, acquired the large island of Formosa, and she is now engaged in arranging for a still larger outlet for her surplus population by the annexation of the Korean peninsula. It will be years before the new territory thus secured will have been fully occupied; and if it should be found possible, by a friendly arrangement with this country, for her to assume the protectorate of the Philippine Islands, a very considerable time would certainly elapse before Japan would feel to any considerable extent the strain of the problem of national expansion.

And in the absence of this there is very little cause to anticipate national aggression on the part of Japan. There is a spirit of unrest abroad among her people, it is true—the aftermath of the great awakening of the last half-century—but there is also a strong perception of proportionate values, characteristic of her public men, and by no means wanting in the nation at large, which rises to the level of that virtue of common sense so long valued as a special possession of their own by the race to which we belong. Under any ordinary circumstances, this quality may be depended on to prevent Japan from doing anything rash in the field of world politics. The Mongolian temperament is essentially a practical one, and neither Japan nor China will be found ready to sacrifice much to the merely ideal. It will be found that, even while they assert their claim to equal treatment, they will ask for nothing unreasonable in itself, and even this they will be in no hurry to demand at the cannon's mouth.

It may be asked whether, if this conclusion is correct, we may dismiss "The Yellow Peril" as a mere bogey man, terrible only to children? The answer must be in the negative. There is a real Mongolian peril in existence now: it is one that is growing, and is certain to continue to grow in the near future; it is one also that cannot be too carefully considered and provided against by all nations that value that form of civilization which is essentially Caucasian both in form and spirit. The peril is not, in the first instance, at any rate, one that can be measured by fleets and armies; it does not depend on the ambition of statesmen, or the longing of successful soldiers to achieve further conquests; it is, in fact, a more serious thing than these, and in the long run it may very well be found to embrace these among its incidents. The peril is the oldest and the most natural one that can arise to disturb human arrangements: the problem of population.

It is probable that to-day not very far short of a third part of the human race is Mongolian. The exact numbers are not known, it is true, but a sufficiently close estimate can be formed, and that points to the conclusion that somewhere about five hundred millions of human beings—probably more rather than less—live to-day in the countries of China, Korea and Japan, and belong practically to the same family of nations, with similar ideals, religious and social, with closely allied languages, and with an old civilization, once active and progressive, but for many centuries fallen into a curious lethargy. The example of Japan shows clearly that the long lethargy of the race has not indicated the final decay of its energy, and that an almost phenomenal awakening may be looked for when the race has been brought into contact with the newer Caucasian civilization. The feature of the case that is really vital, however, is that, while the increase of population among the races occupying China and Japan appears to be remarkable, the territory which they at present occupy is wholly insufficient in extent to support the people under conditions of improved civilization. Japan has awakened to this fact, and has already taken steps to remedy the evil by the extension of her territory: China is now in the very act of awaking, and the question which constitutes the peril of Western or Caucasian civilization is, how, and in what direction, her expansion will take place. That an expansion must take place is, it would seem, inevitable. All experience, as well as logical reason, points to the conclusion that, as only a certain number of human beings can be maintained by any country, the increase of population beyond that limit must mean migration. When—as in past ages—the world was largely unoccupied by mankind, the solution of the problem was comparatively simple: it meant only that the race moved on. In this way Europe, and more recently America, became the scene of racial expansion, and in every case recorded in history some weaker race had to give way before the newcomers, impelled by a pressure caused in some form or other by the increase of population. To-day the problem of racial expansion is complicated by the greater force and vitality of so many of the races that now occupy most parts of the globe fit for human habitation.

That which was easy in the times when Europe was young; that which was not very difficult when the surplus life and energy of Europe in its turn overflowed into America, must become difficult

in another way when the races of eastern Asia overflow their territorial limits, and come into collision with Caucasian civilization in the act of doing so. The real peril of the matter is not to be found so much in the mere competition for space—though that, in the long run, may be serious enough—as in the collision and competition of civilizations. We are already familiar in America with a collision of races in the case of our negro problem, and it is sufficiently serious, as all thinking men are aware; but, after all, that problem is only racial. The negro has no civilization and no fixed ideals of his own. All that he can possibly claim in this way he has got from ourselves. With the Mongolian races it is different; and therein lies the danger of the coming problem.

The countries most immediately interested in the problem are, of course, those most accessible to an overflowing Chinese population, and now occupied by peoples representing our own Caucasian civilization. These are, it need hardly be said, to be found either in America—chiefly in North America—or in Australia. The question of accessibility by land, which determined such questions in past ages, cannot be considered important in this case. The breadth of Asia, which recent events have shown to be an almost insurmountable obstacle in the way of a successful invasion under arms, is for many reasons much more impassable to a wholesale immigration; and even were this less true than it is, the ocean to-day is in nearly every respect far more easy to cross for such purposes than the land. Half a century ago Japan had practically no ocean-going ships; even thirty years ago she had very few: to-day she has fleets of all kinds of vessels, from the ocean liner to the four-masted trading schooner, and her ship-building yards can produce as many more as may be required at short notice. What is true of Japan will in a few years be true of China, only the scale is likely to be a larger one in proportion to the extent of the empire, the numbers of the people, and the vast, though as yet undeveloped, resources of the country. When the surplus population of China fully awakens to the need and the possibility of expansion into new countries, there will be no difficulty in finding means of transport. And in the case of China, far more than in that of Japan, this need of greater territorial space will be one of the first discoveries of her awakened people. Already, as we know, the discovery is being made, though as yet on a scale that is trifling compared with what may be looked for

as soon as the new ideas of human and social betterment that have come with our modern civilization get a firm grip on the imagination of the mass of the people of China. The overflow of a population of four hundred and fifty millions, hitherto confined to a country which is certainly not capable of supporting three hundred millions in accordance with civilized ideas, must be a great one: the really practical question is, Where will they go to?

Like every other overflow of which we have any experience, it is safe to say that it will follow the line of least resistance. In the limited case of Japan, this line has been found so far to lead into Korea, on the one side, and into Formosa, with indications of a further extension to the Philippines and Hawaii, on the other. In the vastly larger instance of continental Mongolia, its tendency will inevitably be to go farther afield. It may be said that there are great islands to the south, and southwest of China that seem to invite such an occupation, and would probably be benefited by it on the whole. Borneo, and even New Guinea, are such islands, and they are at present sparsely occupied by savage tribes who would certainly have no civilization of their own that need object to intimate contact with the reanimated civilization of China. And it is more than likely that a large Chinese population will within the next twenty years finds its way into these islands. To a certain extent, such an immigration has begun already, and when the tide fairly sets in it will almost certainly prove irresistible. The most interesting question is, Will it stop there? So far as indications now existing are a guide, we may say with confidence that, unless conditions can be modified, it certainly will not. The island continent of Australia has for many years past been attractive to Chinese adventurers. Since the comparatively early days of gold-digging in Australia the Chinaman has been a well-known figure there. His numbers, indeed, were not comparatively large, but his industry was conspicuous, and his dogged perseverance, and consequent success under discouraging circumstances, commanded a kind of respect, in spite of the dead wall of separation always felt to exist between him and the rest of the population. With the gradual change that took place in the gold-mining industry of southern Australia from a manual to a machine-conducted industry, the original place of the Chinese adventurers seemed to be gone. Many of them turned to other pursuits, and to-day the market-gardening business for the supply of all Australian cities

is almost entirely in their hands; others, as in America, took up laundryman's work and some other trades in the towns, while many were scattered over the country as cooks on up-country stations. There exists to-day a Chinese quarter in Sydney and another in Melbourne, as characteristically Oriental as anything to be found in San Francisco.

But in the case of Australia this experience, which is, after all, familiar to our own Pacific Coast in most respects, was supplemented by something much more suggestive of future danger. Many Chinese gold-diggers were not disposed to accept a new sort of life, and these gradually drifted northwards along the coastal districts of Queensland on the east and West Australia on the west of the continent, in the hope of finding new alluvial fields on which to work. For some years they were successful, and the fields of northern Queensland and of northwestern Australia were largely frequented by Chinese diggers. None of these fields, however, proved eminently successful, and after a few years they were gradually abandoned by white men in favor of the new fields that were opened up, for the most part in southwestern Australia. In some instances the Chinese diggers followed their example, but by no means in all, and for years after the northern fields—especially in northwestern Australia—had been given up and deserted, both by diggers and Government officials, they were still frequented by roving bands of Chinamen.

Some years ago, the great territory known as the northern territory of South Australia, was formally surrendered by the State Parliament to the Federal Government of The Commonwealth, and accepted by the Federal Parliament on the ground that it was practically impossible for the State Government to deal with it. A glance at the map of Australia will explain the difficulty. The State extended from north to south through the centre of the continent, and, as the only settlement was in the extreme south, the northern half of the country was practically inaccessible from the seat of population and government, except by a voyage of fully four thousand miles. Had the country been absolutely uninhabited, it would have been immaterial what particular Government claimed authority over it; but, as a matter of fact, there had grown up an uneasy feeling that such was not the case, and was becoming less so year after year. It was more than suspected then, and it is well known now, though little is said about it in

Australia, that Chinese immigration on a very considerable scale has for some years been secretly flowing into the country.

An examination of the map will make it evident how easily this could be managed, and will also suggest how very difficult it must be to deal with the problem which it raises. The north coast of Australia, situated, roughly speaking, between the eleventh and sixteenth parallels of south latitude, may be said to be an unknown land. Owing to the deep indentations of its coast, it represents a frontage to the ocean probably little short of two thousand five hundred miles in length, which, although the first discovered part of the Australian continent, has never been really explored. The whole gulf of Carpentaria, with a coast line of more than a thousand miles, as well as the greater part of Arnheimland, representing at least five hundred more, has the usual characteristics of a tropical region, with some variations that are specially Australian. Though little is known of the country lying inland at a distance of more than a hundred and fifty miles from the coast, there is every reason to suppose that, but for its climate—which is very hot—it is calculated to support a large population. The coastal rainfall is heavy; the land is apparently rich; and the fact that a number of considerable rivers flow to the sea seems to show that the well-watered district extends farther inland than it does in most parts of the continent. There have at various times been gold discoveries made at points on both the eastern and western sides of the district, and as the fields on both sides were frequented by a good many Chinamen, some of whom lingered when European diggers gave them up, it is easy to understand how these foreigners may have learned a good deal more of the country and its capabilities than was known to any one else. At any rate, it would seem to be evident they did so. From time to time reports have reached the southern settlements that coasting vessels have found Chinamen digging or prospecting for gold, during the last ten or twelve years, and of late these have become increasingly numerous, and have in some instances taken the form of reports of regular and apparently permanent settlements. One such report which reached the authorities nearly two years ago was to the effect that one settlement of this kind was employed in the cultivation of opium on a considerable scale, and that, unlike the former experience of Australia, the population was not confined to men, but included women and children. These people had no

communication with the European settlements, but it was evident that they had frequent communication by direct trading vessels with southern China.

The problem indicated by such discoveries as these is a serious one, involving the future of Australia, and it may be of more than Australia. The policy of the Commonwealth, it need hardly be said, is very markedly antagonistic to the introduction of cheap labor, and incidentally of what are known as the inferior races, into the country; the problem would seem to be, How is this to be prevented? In the presence of a redundant population an unoccupied country must always be a desirable country, unless it labors under some great natural disadvantages. This is certainly not the case with northern Australia. In addition to this the country is accessible—more easily accessible, indeed, than most others—from the most densely peopled part of China. Almost directly to the north—with nothing between but the islands of Borneo and Celebes—at a distance of eighteen hundred miles, lies the continental Mongolian country, overcrowded almost to the utmost point of endurance; to the south, the unoccupied coast of a continent, stretching 2,400 miles from east to west, offering freedom, well-being, and conditions of untrammeled prosperity such as the race has never known in two thousand years. The Government of the Commonwealth is aware of the danger, but it is placed in a position of unusual difficulty by its dependence on the Labor Party for its very existence, and that party is bitterly opposed to the introduction of such people as Italians, Spaniards, or any other inhabitants of southern Europe, who, while they might for the present occupy the northern coast, and so aid in the exclusion of Asiatics, might in the end create a cheap labor element in the country. Many suggestions have been made, but so far nothing has been done. Meanwhile, the danger presses, and will continue to press with ever-increasing severity. Southwestern America, perhaps even Mexico, may be exposed to a serious danger of this Asiatic invasion within a few years; but northern Australia is at once the nearest and the most sparsely populated of all the countries where an early conflict of the Mongolian and Caucasian civilizations is to be feared and guarded against.

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